

ALASKA  
AUG 15 1921  
FISHERIES

REPORT OF ACTIVITIES IN TERRITORY COVERING KING COVE,  
IKATAN AND PORT MOLLER DISTRICTS, ALASKA,  
SEASON ENDING AUGUST, 1921.

by

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### Opening of the Salmon Fishing season in Ikatan district.

Small schools of salmon began to arrive late in May. A few fish were taken in one of the traps completed by the Pacific American Fisheries in Ikatan Bay May 27. The first fish were packed in the Ikatan cannery June 2. The P. E. Harris & Company's cannery at False Pass, in this district, did not start canning until the middle of June. Mr. Nichols, the superintendent, thought he could eliminate the early run of cheaper grades of fish, such as King and Dog salmon, in that way.

### Fishing methods employed.

The Pacific American Fisheries erected three driven traps to supply their Ikatan cannery; three smaller traps were also driven, which appeared to be more with a view to holding trap location than for actual fishing. The P. E. Harris & Company's cannery at False Pass also drove three traps in Ikatan Bay.

### Migration of Salmon.

This year will be remembered as the Sockeye (Red) salmon year and was predicted by many fishermen, who claimed that this is the four-year cycle of the great 1917 run of red fish in these waters. The escapement of salmon was considerable, as during the height of the run a severe northwest storm prevented all fishing operations. The limiting of the Pacific American Fisheries Ikatan cannery to a maximum of 25,000 cases also helped materially to release a great number of salmon to proceed to their spawning grounds.

Sanitation.

The Ikatan cannery did not operate its by-products plant this year and no special effort has been made to dispose of the offal. Luckily this season was very short and no serious consequences occurred. The cannery of P. E. Harris & Company is much better located regarding the disposition of the offal, as very strong tide currents sweep the immediate vicinity, carrying everything in its path.

Condition of salmon packed.

The proximity of the traps to the canneries makes it ideal for packing the fish fresh, as the farthest trap in this district is only about an hour and a half away from the cannery.

Law enforcement.

The weekly close season was better observed here than in previous years. The inadequate apron strung across in front of the pot, leaving the hearts to fish, has been done away with and shove-downs properly constructed have been substituted. A season's trial, careful study, and inquiry among the fishermen and cannery officers, failed to show any difficulty either in construction or maintaining of the shove-downs.

King Cove District.

The King Cove cannery, property of the Pacific American Fisheries, did not operate this season and as a consequence the escapement of Red salmon in Thin Point Lagoon must have been quite large. Several traps were driven in Morzhovoi Bay to hold the locations of the Pacific American Fisheries' traps but only one has been really fished and the salmon from this trap were sent to the Ikatan cannery.

Shumagin Islands.

The only salmon cannery located at Squaw Harbor did not operate this year. Two large cod-fishing companies, the Alaska and the Union, with headquarters in San Francisco, California, and several independent fishermen maintain stations in and near Unga, Alaska, employing in season about 200 men.

Port Moller District.

This has been the most active field this year in my territory, comprising Herendeen Bay with two canneries, namely, the Everett Packing Company, a 2-line cannery employing three seine boats, and the Phoenix Packing Company, who employed a gill-netting crew in Nelson's Lagoon in addition to three seine boats. This is the firm that brought the floating cannery "Azalea" but used the vessel for transportation only, utilizing her crew in their land cannery. The Pacific American Fisheries cannery at Port Moller used seven of its ten lines and was supplied with salmon from two driven traps near Bear River, about twelve miles from Port Moller, one trap in Port Moller Bay near the cannery, four seine boats and was also drawing on Nelson Lagoon to the extent of about 500,000 Sockeye salmon from the three driven traps at the latter place.

The first salmon canned in Port Moller cannery this season was on June 8, about 350 Sockeyes sent from Nelson Lagoon. The number taken in the lagoon gradually increased but no salmon were found along Bear River coast until the end of June. The prevailing northwest winds were held largely responsible for the late arrival of the large schools of salmon that swarmed in later with a southeast wind; the lateness of the

season precluded the possibility of the smaller firms to make a full pack as their facilities were limited.

#### Nelson Lagoon.

This ideal spawning ground and splendid source of Sockeye salmon is looked upon by the Pacific American Fisheries with a sort of proprietary right and they resent any intrusion, claiming to release from their traps a sufficient number of salmon to insure adequate reproduction, although it was necessary to call their superintendent's attention to the violation even of the letter of the law, Department Circular No. 251, Section 4, which prohibits obstructions across a lagoon greater than one-third of its width, - 350 feet of the lead to one trap being removed as a consequence during construction.

The question where Nelson River ends and the lagoon proper begins was never settled and is very important.

#### Transportation.

No provision was made for my transportation between the different districts in the territory assigned to me, Shumagin Island to Port Heiden, inclusive, or for necessary patrol work, and I was unable to secure transportation to Port Heiden during the fishing season. It is chiefly due to the courtesy of the Pacific American Fisheries, who not only furnished my subsistence but nearly all transportation free, that I was enabled to get around to the different points. I made special efforts to cross overland on foot from Bering Sea to the Pacific side, as the steamers of the Pacific American Fisheries maintained only a monthly service which was hardly adequate in the brief season.

### Cod-fishing.

As previously stated, nearly all of the cod fishing in my territory is concentrated around Unga, Alaska. About 200 men are employed and two of the larger companies maintain well established stations, stores and private radio equipment.

The spawning season is in March and April and summer fishing in these waters is best in June and July.

### Whaling.

The whaling station at Akutan, Alaska, is not operating this year and the projected new station on Unalaska Island also failed to materialize, due as I understand it to the unfavorable financial and market condition. Incidentally, the cod fishermen are glad, as they claim the destruction of whales is injuring the cod fishing industry. In 1912 about 400 whales were taken around the Shumagin Islands; hardly any are seen now in the same locality.

### Atkafish.

Experiments are being made to pack atkafish by a small number of individuals, the most successful of them is a Mr. Quean of Unalaska, whose method is to split them the same as mackerel, salt for eight days, and then pack them in kits, sprinkling medium-ground salt between the layers. In this manner the fish showed no sign of rust after ten months, which is usual to the oily fish packed in any other manner. These fish are very numerous in Unalaska and around the Shumagin Islands.

Sea Otter.

About sixteen were reported to have been seen as follows:

three near Belkofski,  
four Unalaska,  
two Otter Bay, Unimak Island,  
seven near Sannak Islands.

Weather Conditions.

Exceptionally fine weather prevailed most of the time; the precipitation was very slight during the fishing season and may in a measure account for the retardation of the late run of fish.

Approximate pack of the season.

No special effort was made by the largest packers in my territory, the Pacific American Fisheries, to secure a large pack this year. Only two of their canneries were operating, one at Ikatan and the other at Port Moller.

Pacific American Fisheries, Ikatan cannery,	25,000 cases
P. E. Harris & Company's cannery at False Pass,	about 40,000 "
Pacific American Fisheries, Port Moller cannery,	about 77,000 "
Everett Packing Company, Herendeen Bay cannery,	20,000 " (approx.)
Phoenix Packing Company, " " "	about <u>20,000</u> "
Total about	182,000 "
Percentage of Red salmon Ikatan district about	87 per cent
" " " " Port Moller " "	95 " "

Recommendations.

That a survey be made of Nelson Lagoon to determine the mouth of Nelson River, with a view to safeguard a most valuable source of Red Salmon from unnecessary encroachment.

To amend Section 4, Department Circular No. 251 in such a way that the one-third of the distance across a stream, estuary or lagoon, permitted to be obstructed, should be considered from the shore end. This will eliminate obstructing the channel where the salmon go up to the spawning ground.

To provide suitable transportation.